See FOIA "Meeks" transfer file

Mr. Tom Susman, Counsel
Administrative Practices Subcommittee
New Senate Office Bldg.,
Washington, D.C.

4/29/76

Dear Tom,

I did not expect to be writing you again so soon. Were it not about a matter of potential immediate importance I'd not be taking the time now because I have a considerable amount of work to do in several FOIA cases in which the government persists in efforts to rewrite the law in court.

The government now is under considerable pressure in the whole field of political assassinations. There is almost never a time when one of my suits can't force further and very embarrassing disclosures hurtful to the executive agencies. Their way of fighting back is to arrange the kinds of uses they prefer for materials they make available, not uncommonly to very good reporters who lack the knowledge to interpret what they are given other than as explained to them.

There is precedent for officials giving these operations an anti-Kennedy twist. I have a chapter on this in Post Mortem and a long series of letters with the Archives on it. Dr. Rhoads has been a leader in these kinds of operations going back to before he was appointed Archivist. That something of this nature may be in the works now is clearly possible.

The Archives has let Howard Roffman have perhaps a hundred pages of previously-suppressed records dealing with the so-called Deed of Gift and the transfer of autopsy materials to the Archives. All of these records and more clearly should have been sent me beginning not later than 1967 pursuant to a number of my requests on which I dealt directly with Dr. Rhoads. Howard not only knows this - he inventoried this part of my files years ago.

He has prepared a long memo on those records he has received and his further inquiries. He has sent a copy to me only. For the moment I will share with you two of his observations. At the beginning, "They reveal that the screening of the Kennedys was far worse, far more obscene than we knew before." He concludes with the belief that Senator Kennedy should have personal knowledge of this and asks my opinion about his seeking to do this through The Center for Government Responsibility for which, as a law student, he works.

By a fortunate accident he and I were able to speak at length last night during breaks for news in a talk show we did together by phone for four hours. I asked Howard to take no initiative now and to let me do what I am in this letter. He agreed.

On the off chance that some disinformation operation may be afoot, I'll tell you how to reach him if there is a need. His address is 912 SW 7 Ave., #3, Gainesville, Fla. 32601. His phone is 904/373-9194.

Whether or not you think the time has come for the Senator to know in detail about these kinds of dealings and their potential, I think you should add this new detail to what I told you several years ago. The Senator is now the executor of the JFK estate. From Howard's commentary on these new documents there is no reasonable doubt that I understated in telling you that those the family then trusted in matters of this nature served them less than well. I suggest that it would be a good precaution for you to meet with Howard and me as soon as you can. Howard will, I am sure, be willing to

fly up. As an alternative, so you can get an idea of what may be involved, I can bring some to you on Wednesday the fifth when I'll be in Washington for a calendar call in C.A.75-1996.

My reasons for asking Howard not to communicate any of this to his Center, which has done FOIA work for the Senator, are chiefly because, regardless of whether or not something is now up, this is a delicate matter and because I believe the Senator's and the family's interests are best served by confidentiality now.

Howard is as thoroughly a dependable a person as you will ever meet. I have trusted him totally since he was 15 years old. He is now 23. He is as fine and principled a person as I have ever met. He has an exceptional intelligence to go with his excellent character. Unlike most of the people in this field he is not anti-Kennedy. Also unlike most he will not promote his own interest at someone else's expense. Of all the people I know I have asked him and Jim Lesar to be my executors and to control what happens to my files.

If we do meet on this I believe it would be good for Jim to be with us. He and I will begin this coming Wednesday together in court.

It is inevitable that before long these records will receive public attention. I would like to have something to do with seeing to it that they are not again misused. If I have not heard from you by the time I finish the drafts I must do for Jim I will make confidential explorations of what seems possible, in consultation with Howard.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

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